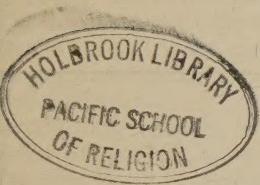




The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

APRIL 1976



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BUSINESS MANAGER'S NOTICE

Rates of subscription per annum: In India Rs. 6. In England £1. In U.S.A. \$2.50. Foreign subscription paid in India Rs. 9. Single copy 65 P. (Bank Commission of Re. 1 to be added on all mofussil cheques.)

Honorary (and ex-officio) Business Manager: Mrs. D. L. Gopal Ratnam, M.A. All remittances and communications about new subscriptions, discontinuance of subscriptions, advertisements and change of address should be sent to the Business Manager, *South India Churchman*, Synod Office, P.O. 4906, Cathedral, Madras-600 086. Telephone: 811266.

Honorary Agent in the United Kingdom: Mrs. Elton, The Rectory, Itteringham, Norfolk, Nor. 17y.

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Kindernothilfe C.S.I. Council for Child Care

While greeting the delegates of the 15th Session of the Synod of the Church of South India in Tiruchi in January, the Rev. Paul Gerhard Aring, President of K. N. H. put forward three questions: (a) Is K. N. H. accepted and welcomed by the CSI or is Germany exporting 'our conception'? (b) Is the extent of help from K. N. H. hindering or already helping CSI to think and plan and (c) What are the goals of the CSI for the children here in India? Is it possible to plan?

* * * *

From its modest beginning, within a decade K. N. H. has expanded its programme considerably and in one year alone it has received and spent one crore, sixty-three lakhs and twenty-seven thousand rupees. Over 18,000 children through 325 homes/hostels have been benefited by its programmes: Out of the 18 dioceses, fourteen have mentioned about the valuable work of K. N. H. in their reports presented to the Synod. They have appreciatively mentioned of the 'very good training programme' for the hostel wardens, 'good buildings for hostel children', of the 'new life centres', help received for training centres, crèche programme and of the thousands supported through hostels and boarding homes. There were also significant programmes for the handicapped (leper, blind, deaf, and dumb, mentally retarded and polio crippled children). There are still a number of building plans to be completed in the coming years. K. N. H. has taken a policy decision not to expand any more its normal work through hostels/homes 'but to concentrate in future on special homes like the home for the physically and mentally handicapped, homes for those undergoing technical/professional courses, children's new life centre, crèche centres in the slums and in rural areas'. K. N. H. works through the CSI. Council for Child Care. Some of the dioceses, in addition have received help through the programmes of the World Vision and Christian Children's Fund, both based in the U. S. A. Thus the dioceses have been immensely benefited and through the availability of the most generous grants from K. N. H. they have been able to render invaluable help to many Children. For all these, the CSI is greatly indebted to the thousands of people in Germany who have contributed so liberally through K. N. H. One way of expressing our thanks is by seriously trying to attempt to answer the questions so sincerely raised by the Director who is deeply concerned in the life and work both of the CSI and K. N. H.

* * * *

There are differences of opinion about the Churches' direct involvement in the administration of large funds. The fear is that if the churches administer they domesticate the programmes and distort them to their own benefit. There are at least three models in the CSI with regard to work among children. The first is that of an organisation which operates in India, has its own



office and staff and gives money generously, actually in many instances more money than the sponsored children need. They have a 'take it or leave it' attitude and there is no discussion with the churches. The schools have committees and they ask for the money and spend it. The second organisation channels the funds through an Indian committee whose members are ecclesiastical leaders of the churches and they make the decisions. K. N. H. has chosen a third model in which they operate under the name of a committee of the Church of South India and have correspondents in different dioceses. At times, there may be a temptation not to hurt the donors, but to accept and welcome all their programmes. However, the model provides opportunities for discussion. Only through free and frank discussions and by struggling together, an identity of conception will emerge. That is the test of any genuine partnership.

To answer directly whether Germany was merely exporting its 'conception', one should know what they expect from and how they view the programmes. Only then can any intelligent comment be made. However, to start the dialogue certain questions could be raised. The answers would indicate whether the conception of K. N. H. and the expectations of the CSI are identical. The first major question is: (A) For whom is the aid meant? (i) who are its recipients? On a casual view, it looks as if it is mainly for Christians and only incidentally for children whose parents belong to the Faiths other than Christianity. When Christians form 2.7% of the population, what percentage of the benefits should go to them? Three per cent of 18,000 children would be 540. In practice only that number of children of other Faiths may be helped through the programmes. Or may be the 97.3% of the children share only 10% of the aid. *Poverty is common to all.* As common sharers of the poverty, is it possible to receive the aid proportionately? Or what percentage does the CSI Council of Child Care want to reserve for Christian children and definitely ear-mark the rest for the others? (ii) If the aid is for the poor, who are the poor children of India? It seems that most of the parents of the aided children are salaried employees. In many ways, they are a privileged class. The children come from middle or lower middle class homes. Their parents certainly find it extremely difficult to pay for the children. However, they are poor only relatively. There are five to ten children outside the schools of India for every Child who is inside. Many thousands in the villages never see the inside of a high school. In the conferences and synod sessions, the CSI has affirmed the service to the mass of under-privileged and dispossessed children as a priority. Such children may also have to be fully supported. How best could

they become the beneficiaries if our declared objective is to help exactly such children? (B) What is the purpose of the aid? In the West there are endless debates about the concept of 'service' or 'mission/evangelism' as the motive for aid programmes. How does K. N. H. conceive of their programme? Obviously the CSI Council of Child Welfare seems to have *nurture* of Christian Children as the motive. In some places, the new life centres are for Christians only. So also is the training of wardens, and the nurses for crèche programmes. May be it is because of the vast number of children of Christian faith who are in the hostels/homes supported by K. N. H. 'Service' seems to be a by-product. If 'service' is the main objective, then obviously most of the beneficiaries will be the poorest children of the adherents of the religion of the majority in the land. Further, if one listens to the talks or sermons of the workers of the organisations like the National Missionary Society or the Indian Missionary Society or of the conveners of the evangelism/mission committees of the dioceses, one hears of the tremendous physical needs of the children of the poorest tribals, hill people and others. These unfortunates seem to live in another world. And always appeal to help them is made for the sake of evangelism/mission. Are the motives in helping the children the same as seen by the people, who give in Germany and of the Churches in India as receivers and distributors?

The answers to the above would naturally lead us to ask: In that context, *How* should the work be carried out? How are the decisions made and who participates in the decision-making? At the diocesan level, powers to decide about recipients seem to lie with the bishops, presbyters, principals and heads of institutions and the correspondents. They are all Christians and there is no representation from the community at large or participation by the elders of the villages and towns or of the government. There is so much talk these days about the participation of the people in programmes geared to be of benefit to them. They may even draw out different priorities for their children which should at least promote further discussion between K.N.H. and the CSI Council of Child Welfare.

* * * *

In one respect, the amount received from K.N.H. is staggering. It is all the more so when a number of dioceses are struggling hard to pay their pastors or even to support their on going work. Whereas in the context of the tremendous needs and the possibilities of meeting them the amount of one crore, sixty three lakhs and twenty seven thousand rupees is not large by any means. Partnership involves a sharing of responsibilities as well as the concerns and problems. During the last decade, many donor agencies have learnt of the futility of spending large amounts and in quite a few circles there are frustrations about the large projects. The emphasis to seek for justice, human dignity and equal opportunities for all is gaining momentum. There is a search for small creative models of development oriented projects where the focus is on the awakening and participation of the people in the villages. Liberation of children from their inheritances of superstition, privations, illiteracy, poverty and malnutrition is much more needed. In the final analysis committed men and women from within the nation and from among the communities should come forward. Large relief operations of the churches in India funded from abroad are finding it extremely

difficult to enthuse the members of the churches to give because of their assumption of the availability of endless amounts from other countries. In that respect, large funds are a hindrance for the C.S.I. to plan for the future. Even to carry on the currently committed programmes, large amounts are necessary. Already at least one diocese has candidly admitted this fact by reporting to the synod that 'our total dependence on foreign funds has increased, however, because of the large amounts being received for hostels and crèches from KNH. The income from the endowment funds provided by KNH will cover only 6% of their annual grants, and if the grants were to be substantially curtailed the diocese would be in serious difficulties'. Because of the recent ordinances and the new laws coming into operation, the future of some of the shopping centres and investments in the buildings seem to be in jeopardy. More buildings would also mean more taxes and liabilities. It is recognised that there are no easy answers. The extent of amount has been both a help and a hindrance. However, the new policy decision of KNH is to be welcomed. Like the exodus into the wilderness, the programmes whatever they are should move to the remote villages.

* * * *

For a church with limited resources and a small membership compared to those of other Faiths, it is an impossible task to plan for the children in India. Also there will be different answers with regard to the goals of the CSI for the children in India. Some would definitely say that the goal always will be to make Christians the children of India. To preach the gospel to the children would be their primary objective. Others would want the church in co-operation with others to provide an environment where every child will have equal opportunities to develop his God-given abilities and creativity. It is a help to grow into maturity in freedom so as to take their own decision with regard to their faith, livelihood and family. It is a crucial responsibility of the entire nation and the church in India should participate with others and never attempt to set a goal by itself for all the children in India. The church has to take a humble stance. It is here that communication is essential. It is not only the communication of KNH to its own constituency, but also the communication of the CSI both to its own members and the community at large. Are we communicating the same message to all these people? Our integrity and credibility will be tested at that point. What has made a lady in Germany contribute towards the welfare of a child in India when she herself is in dire need? Why do people in the CSI feel that all the people in Germany are rich and that they should therefore send money for the people in India? Why have the members of the CSI not encouraged to share their meagre resources with one another? There are so few Indian foster-parents and it is not because they cannot afford to but it is because of a failure in communication. It is a vast subject but here we would only plead for a well co-ordinated programme of communication. Only then, the God-given resources could be shared mutually for the benefit of all. As we continue to discuss the best ways of serving at least some of the children in India, we thank God for the generous help of many people in this venture and for the dedicated services of the many men and women in the various institutions supported by KNH.

I believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The objectors to the Resurrection are many. The scientist, specially the Biologist would argue and say organism human and animal sometime die and that is the end. Any reasonable and honest thinker cannot but join hands with the Greeks and the Jews in calling Resurrection 'Foolishness' and 'a Stumbling Block'. Then, there is the challenge of the Pessimist; He would say that if it is true historically that Jesus died on the cross and all the evil in the world brought him to that tragic end, can we not say that evil is the 'be all and the end all' of life? In other words, does not evil have the final say? As the late Archbishop William Temple has said, 'The Cross is the Devil's worst'. It is no good being put off by such objectors and to give up one's attempt to face the problem of the meaning of life in the face of evil. This is why the same Archbishop goes on to say that 'But the Cross is God's best'.

What then is the Christian understanding of the Resurrection? We have to go by stages:—

The Easter Experience of the Early Disciples : ‘The Risen Christ’.

There may not be any evidence to prove Christ's Resurrection for any of the objectors. But what about the disciples' experience? They were just like other men who had lost hope and thought that with the cross everything was over and more than that, they were all plunged into utter despair; frustration and bewilderment. 'Their hopes were dead, despair was in their hearts and fear had them in its grip', as someone rightly puts it :

But suddenly an extraordinary experience dawned upon them. They saw the risen Christ at different times and different places and what was surprising, their experience was the same! Hallucination or illusion is out of question, because every one's experience was exactly the same and was real. And when they started comparing notes, it was such a surprising similarity and the content of their experience was the same. In St. John 21:7 (NEB), we read that when the disciples saw Him, one of them said, looking at Him, 'It is the Lord'. Doubting Thomas, when he touched the Risen Christ, exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God'; proving that the disciples made no mistake in identifying 'The Risen Christ'.

The appearance of the Risen Christ made a real and lasting impression upon them all. These disciples had known Jesus in His earthly ministry, heard Him, touched Him, saw His miracles and also saw Him go to the Cross. But they had this other more exciting experience also. It was to meet the Risen Christ. This is what the Archbishop A. M. Ramsay calls in his book *The Resurrection of Christ, the Double perspective*. And we need to ask, what effect did this 'Double perspective' of the disciples have on the people outside, i.e., those in the world? Just as the disciples had this 'double experience' they in turn, made a 'double impression' upon the people of their day. The world had known the disciples to be a timid and frightened lot, hiding themselves from the public disillusioned; this then is the first impression the world had formed of them. But the second one was that of a marvellously transformed group of disciples, who had regained their faith, banded

together and formed the Church, set out on a life-long mission as ambassadors of God they knew in Christ! Their lives were now integrated, purposive and powerful. Not only so, they became mature Christians, ready and willing to meet martyrdom.

In the Easter experience of the early disciples, there is yet another point worth noticing. The emphasis had to be on the side of the disciples, i.e., on the part of the receptionists, so as to renew and reinforce them so that they could witness boldly to the Risen Christ. The idea is borne out by a similar instance; an experience again of the disciples when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, filling them and fortifying them with power. They began to speak in languages of the people present on the occasion. The purpose was again to make known the Gospel to all. They were prepared for a powerful witnessing to the risen and ever living Christ.

'FACT TO FAITH EXPERIENCE'—'THE LIVING CHRIST'

By now the bodily manifestations of the Risen Lord seemed to cease: neither do the Gospel records show that the Christians claim to have seen Christ in the same manner as did the disciples. Some feel that in the Gospels, more stress is laid on the physical manifestation; others are of the view that these are 'Visions', divinely ordered. But discrepancies in the Gospel records do not disprove the Resurrection. The remarkable thing is that the experience of those Christians was not different! The outward and bodily manifestations were not there but inwardly they experienced the presence of 'the living Christ'.

How did that happen? It could only have happened through faith. The early disciples witnessed the fact of the Resurrection but the Christians afterwards experienced the 'Living Christ' in them and in their midst. This was by *Faith*. Once a Russian Leader and a hater of Christianity and a denier of Christ and His Resurrection visited a village and spoke eloquently decrying Christian Faith. He said that it was all a set of lies what the Christians believe, that Christ lived and died and rose again. Nothing could be more absurd than that! His arguments, persuasive and powerful held the crowd spell-bound. There was for a time of dead silence. Then suddenly something happened. A Christian pastor present sprang to his feet, got permission to speak, and cried, 'Jesus is risen' and to which the huge crowd responded leaping to its feet, shouting with a tremendous cry rending the air saying, 'Jesus is risen indeed!' Down the ages similar occasions have taken place, not similar in 'form but in content'. When Peter preached Christ's Resurrection to crowd (see Acts '24, 32; 3: 15, 26; 4: 16, 33; 5: 30; 10: 40; 13: 30-34; 17:31; immediately a 'Fact to Faith' experience was the effect. What shall we do to be saved? Pricked in their hearts, i. e., to say being convinced of the Death of Christ (Which was caused by them) and also challenged by the living, Christ they asked 'Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ', was a reply given to them. Presentation of the Fact of the Resurrection followed by the Faith of the listeners is not uncommon in our days. Compare the meetings in which Billy Graham speaks.

Or any Mass evangelistic movement of modern days. As in early days so now, when people are really and truly faced with the fact of Christ's Resurrection, they are by the force of faith find their way into the Fold.

'THE CONFRONTING AND CHALLENGING CHRIST'

The living Christ is always present in the World victoriously active. He is also confronting and challenging groups of people and individuals. He so confronted St. Paul that he was made to do the very opposite of what he had been doing! No longer was he destroying the Christian Churches but constructing, establishing and strengthening it. In India Sadhu Sunder Singh had a similar challenging experience; St. Francis of Assisi, Ramon Lull are some of the others. I dare say we too, if found worthy, will get a chance to meet Him!

But more strikingly in our days, the living Christ is confronting and challenging us all through the widespread 'Secularism'. This is perhaps the least expected; because in a secular society, the majority of people do not profess belief in God. And one wonders whether

the living Christ would confront and challenge through 'Secularism'? Yet, is it possible that often religion and tradition of any kind tends to form a kind of enclosure cutting us off from any contact with the living God! The old testament religion in the days of Isaiah and Amos, had the same effect on the people (Is. 11-17; or Is. 58). Religion is attacked by these men of old in the name of simple responsibility and in the interest of justice, freedom and equality of the fellow ordinary man. The living Christ challenges the people also through Governments. May we not believe that the challenging Christ is behind 'the Emergency' today?

So the living Christ nowadays confronts the world all over and especially to conform us to Himself and to follow in His life of service to humanity. In this connection, as Bishop Newbigin says, 'God is always, so to speak, beyond our religion' (*Christ our Eternal Contemporary* page 71 ff.). The challenge of the living Christ today through 'Secularism' is to come out of our religion and traditional life to a real life of faith trusting in the living Christ.

D. M. SAMUEL,
Presbyter.

Madras.

On Development Aid

As someone interested in the problems of poverty and development one of my purposes in visiting India has been to try and achieve a better understanding of what is being done in this field.

With this in mind, I have recently visited three rural areas where voluntary programmes of aid to villagers are functioning. These are the area around Oddanchatram near Dindigul in Tamil Nadu from where an extensive health programme is run, Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh where the Rayalaseema Development Trust is based and Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, where the Central Office of the Village Reconstruction Organisation is located.

The Christian Fellowship Hospital in Oddanchatram acts as the base for a health programme which covers the whole of the Oddanchatram Panchayat Union. As well as the General Hospital, there are specialised wards for leprosy, T. B. and now cancer. A leprosy re-habilitation centre trains leprosy patients in some simple craft such as metal work, weaving or sandal making, trying to make it possible for these patients to a life as near normal as possible. Funds for the hospital come from the Government, private donations and from what patients can afford to pay, the specialised wards also receive money from funding agencies in the West.

The Community health programme based on the hospital, consists of a regular programme of mobile clinics visiting all the out-lying villages in the Panchayat Union. The clinics run by a doctor and a nurse, are backed up by the work of para-medical workers. At the present, the programme is expanding to the extent that there will soon be para-medical workers permanently in each village. The paramedical workers are young, local villagers trained by personnel of the community health programme, they have some basic medical knowledge and also know something about preventive medicine, hygiene and nutrition, their role is to act as day-to-day health advisors in the village and to prepare

and remind the villagers of the visit of the clinic, they will also refer cases needing urgent treatment to the hospital.

Other similar organisations, from all over South India, send their paramedical workers to be trained in Oddanchatram, this, if anything, is a measure of the success of the programme.

Connected with the community health programme, are a series of Balwadi Schools where the children (up to 5 years) are given among other things, a free mid-day meal, funds for this and the community health programme come from abroad.

Running a medical programme in these rural conditions, is extremely difficult and requires a lot of patience and commitment; probably the biggest obstacle is the lack of understanding among the villagers of the basic principles of modern medicine and their reluctance to change their old customs. However, despite these difficulties, the work has been very successful and moreover the organisation has retained a feeling of vitality and purpose backed up by a strong Christian commitment to helping those in need.

The Rayalaseema Development Trust is founded entirely from the West, it is one of, if not the largest voluntary and aid programmes in Asia. Its activities have branched out over the years meeting demands as they appeared in the Anantapur District. It is involved in digging wells, supplying pump-sets and gobar gas plants, sponsoring agricultural extension workers, running a health programme and several medical centres, building houses for villagers after fire disasters and providing alternative employment for villagers by sponsoring rural industries such as brick-making, stone-cutting candle and soap making. This branching out into various different activities and the size of the Trust may have been its undoing. At present, although large new grants from Germany have recently been

sanctioned, the Trust is going through a period of minor crisis and change and an attempt is being made to reorganize the Trust and its administration.

Visiting the R.D.T., I began to realise the magnitude and the complexity of the problems faced in administering development aid at the grass root level. For instance, just how does one ensure that poor farmers really do benefit from the aid given to them? A Rs. 5,000/- grant for digging a well and Rs. 6,000/- well and pump-set may mean that the farmer can cultivate another 8 acres but he may easily have put himself in debt for the rest of his life to raise his Rs. 1,000/- How does one decide who are the farmers in a village who should be given such aid? Is the answer possibly in communal farming? And would that work in India? These are just a few of the questions that spring to mind.

Sponsoring rural industries which provide alternative work and tend to stabilise a rural economy is basically a good idea. But if one is trying to pay decent wages and do without bonded labour, it is often difficult to compete with market prices established by less scrupulous employers, yet to continue such a project it must be economically viable.

Much valuable work has undoubtedly been done by the R. D. T. and many of its workers are committed to its cause, however for the Trust's successful work to continue it must first solve its internal problems of organisation and administration.

The village Reconstruction Organisation in Guntur was originally formed to meet the catastrophe of the destruction of many villages in the Krishna-Godavari Delta area by floods and cyclones in 1969, since then, its field of activity has extended all over Andhra Pradesh and beyond into Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The Organisation receives funds from the Government as well as from funding agencies both within India and abroad.

The V. R. O. believes strongly in participation and will only undertake to reconstruct a village if the community as a whole show they are prepared to help. The V. R. O. provides the funds, the materials and the technical expertise, the villagers do the actual construction work themselves.

Plans are formulated in discussions between the V. R. O. and the village leaders; several of the younger village men are trained in the techniques required for the construction work. The designs for houses are simple, the important thing being to construct a roof solidly held up by pillars, after that the walls, floors, timber work, plastering are left to the discretion of the new home owners. Stress is continually laid on the principle that all should participate actively in the reconstruction of the village.

Once the construction is completed, the V. R. O. role does not however end. Volunteers, a health worker, a teacher and a social worker, stay on in the village helping the villagers to settle down and to encourage them to look after their new village and if possible reach a higher standard of living and education.

V. R. O. volunteers are all young people, mostly college graduates which lends a certain youthful vitality to the whole project, the work is also a valuable training in Community Service for them.

The results achieved by the V. R. O. have been spectacular, particularly impressive is the degree of participation that they have managed to obtain from villagers.

It is difficult in such a short article to do justice to three such organisations or to raise all the thoughts and ideas that pass through a visitor's head, however I have attempted to convey what struck me most and I would

like to end with some general thoughts on development aid.

The basic problem we face is one of poverty and the answer to it, as has been frequently stated, is a re-distribution of wealth and an equalisation of opportunity.

Many people feel that this will never be possible without a complete change of our economic system and our social values. The argument continues that development aid is merely patching up and perpetuating the old system, moreover looked at in harsh economic terms this aid does not make sense: giving money to a beggar merely encourages him to continue begging.

However aid and help to those in need is very much part of the Christian ethic. Christianity teaches that every little bit of help is useful and worthwhile, and to help, is a virtue and a moral duty of man. It is this belief that is behind the strong commitment of the Christians working in the three organisations I visited.

Certain members of society are in a weaker position, through no fault of their own, because they are sick, old, oppressed or exploited by others, morally we cannot leave these people to their fate. Even apart from Christian ethic, aid is inherent in society, all societies and social grouping, from the family upwards, help their weaker members, indeed this is one of the reasons for the formation of social groups. Thus we cannot dismiss aid outright.

We are therefore faced with a dilemma: should we continue development aid or not? Does it really help to solve the problem of poverty?

There are, I believe, two aspects to the answer. Firstly, we cannot condemn aid outright, it is too basic a principle of society, the problem lies more in how aid should be administered, what form it should take. This is a very complex economic, social as well as political problem, the V.R.O.'s principle of co-operative participation may be part of the answer, also the whole question of intermediate technology and another development would have to be discussed.

Secondly, we should consider where this aid will come from. Should we try to define 'levels of responsibility'? That is, for instance is aid to the poor people of India the nation's own responsibility or that of the whole world? Once again, this involves a whole series of issues among them the question of moral and political dependence of the receiver on the contributor which may lead to excessive paternalism or, on an international level, neocolonialism, thus negating the whole value of the initial aid given.

It should be noted that although the idea of putting a complete end to development aid was not accepted this does not imply that the necessity for a new economic system and new social values should also be rejected. Indeed the present system has manifestly failed to solve the problem and such a change may be necessary.

The whole issue of development aid is an old and complex one and I do not pretend to have touched on all its aspects. I have tried to represent the thoughts that my experiences brought to mind. The controversy about the validity of aid is likely to continue for a long time, indeed there may be no final answer, but in the meantime, while we are searching for a better solution and till our present efforts prove to be misguided, we should not and I believe cannot reject development aid outright as it is too basic to our society. Finally, the efforts of those committed to help people in need should be encouraged and each one of us should attempt to contribute to this work.

JAMES W. MACKIE.

Mar Thoma-CSI Fellowship in Bangalore

Representatives of Mar Thoma-CSI churches in Bangalore met on March 1, 1976, to discuss possibilities for closer co-operation and fellowship. Under the joint-chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. Mar Chrysostom and the Rt. Rev. K. E. Gill, about 20 representatives, both laymen and presbyters, including three women, discussed the recommendation of Mr. W. O. George of Alwaye, for closer ties similar to what is prevailing in Kerala.

The following recommendations have been made:

1. To invite the Mar Thoma church to participate in the CSI United Service held on the last Sunday of every month of five Sundays—the first of these to be in May 1976.

2. Parish level united eucharist to be held first at Mar Thoma church on July 18, at 8-30 a.m. The Rt. Rev. K. E. Gill celebrating according to the CSI liturgy, with the Rt. Rev. Mar Chrysostom assisting, and Rev. Dr. J. R. Chandran preaching. A similar united eucharist to be held at St. Mark's church on November 21, at the same time, with Bishop Mar Chrysostom celebrating according to the Mar Thoma liturgy, assisted by Bishop Gill, and the Rev. M. A. Thomas preaching.

That such a service be followed with time for coffee, discussion and fellowship. Invitation to be extended to members of all churches to attend. After this another CSI church to be chosen for this fellowship.

3. Where churches have the practice of holding annual conventions, joint-conventions may be held, as far as language will permit.

4. Inter-cessions in the liturgy may include prayers for the heads of the churches without any further official permission.

5. Cottage prayer meetings may be held are-awise at which members of both churches in the area, may gather to worship together.

6. To introduce and prepare the members of the two churches for this programme for closer co-operation, a letter to go as from the two bishops, enjoining the presbyters and members to endeavour zealously to make this goal possible.

7. That this group of representatives continue as a nucleus to work for the accomplishment of the recommendations made; Bishop Gill to be Chairman, and Mrs. V. Arangaden, the Convener.

VIMALA ARANGADEN.

CSI-Mar Thoma Consultation at Thiruvalla on 7th January 1976

Thirty-three representatives of Mar Thoma and CSI Churches in Kerala met together, in Thiruvalla for a consultation. His Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Thoma Metropolitan offered prayers and Rt. Rev. T. B. Benjamin was elected to the Chair.

Mr. W. O. George in his opening talk affirmed that Christian unity was a gift of God and it was received by those who obeyed His will with repentance and prayer and who were willing to be humble and self-giving.

Rt. Rev. Alexander Mar Theophilus, Suffragan Metropolitan, opened the discussion by emphasising the need to implement the resolutions of the 17th May 1974 at the local level.

He reported the decision of the consultation of the Mar Thoma and C.S.I. Bishops (in Kerala) of 16th April 1975, in selecting nine places to conduct meetings under the leadership of the Bishops of the CSI and Mar Thoma Dioceses with a view to promote full communion and to take practical steps at local level.

His Grace Dr. Yuhanan Mar Thoma Metropolitan supported the idea of involving the common people in these discussions. They should know the nature of the union between the churches and determine the lines of co-operation at local level. He said that if any new mission field is opened in other parts of the country by the Mar Thoma Church, i.e., in the CSI or CNI area, it will be only in co-operation with the respective churches. He urged the two churches to go forward together trusting in the Divine Guidance.

Bishop Benjamin said that co-operation in all the areas

should be the aim of the two churches. With regard to the evangelistic work, he referred to the co-operation of the different missionary bodies as per the comity of missions. This can be extended to the construction of church buildings. He emphasised the importance of discipline in each church. Written permission from the diocesan bishop must be insisted on when a member wants to join the other church or needs a sacrament like matrimony even when the two churches are co-operating.

Recommendations :

1. Regarding the resolution to remember the heads of CSI, CNI and MT Churches by name in the intercession of the Holy Eucharist, it was decided to request the MT Suffragan Metropolitan, the Deputy Moderator of CSI and the Deputy Moderator of CNI to send out a joint-circular to all their churches.

2. The conference heard with gratitude that mutual participation in Episcopal consecration was fully implemented.

3. The practice of celebration of Holy Communion by MT priests in accordance with the MT Liturgy or CSI Liturgy in the CSI Churches and by the CSI Priests in accordance with the CSI or MT Liturgy in the MT churches already begun must be continued at least once in the next 6 months in all our churches.

4. Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius and the Rev. V. T. Kurien were requested to write jointly an article explaining the term Full Communion, Partial or

Limited Communion for the edification of our clergy and laity.

5. It was resolved to request the MT Sabha Council and The Executive or the CSI Dioceses to send representatives to constitute joint boards for theological training, evangelisation (convention) Christian education (Sunday School) general education, medical work, social activities, youth work and women's work, urban and industrial mission.

The Membership of these Boards be limited to 12 (6 from the CSI and 6 from the MT). The six members must be from the three dioceses.

6. It was agreed to conduct combined clergy retreats on three area levels.

7. It was agreed that the Lord's prayer be used in the

same version in both the churches. St. Mathews version was accepted.

8. Printing of Common Hymn Book may be taken up at an early date.

9. The Conference discussed the joint declaration of the CSI, CNI and MT Theological Commission. After lively discussions it was unanimously agreed that the name of the new Church should be *Church of India*.

REV. K. C. SETH

RT. REV. PHILIPPOSE MAR

REV. K. P. PHILIP

W. O. GEORGE

CHRYSOSTOM.

RT. REV. T. B. BENJAMIN

Chairman.

A Critique of Rural Parish Education

Introduction

Christian Parish Education in rural India today presents a rather bleak picture and leaves much to be desired. Such is the general impression that one gets even after a cursory survey of the situation in the 20 odd main line protestant denominational churches and also in the several hundred sectarian groups who mainly concentrate their work in the urban areas. According to 1971 census, there were 14.23 million Christians—including the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. By now, in 1976, this figure has gone upto some 16 millions—out of 600 millions of total population—that is about 2.7 per cent. Of these, 8 million may be counted as of protestant persuasion and we may make a safe surmise that nearly 5 to 6 millions of them form our village congregations, including a vast number in the Tribal areas of North-East India and other hill regions.

The Chief Features of the Present Situation would appear to be the following:—1. PREACHING seems to be the chief form of *Christian Teaching* in rural congregations. This is done periodically and also sporadically by Pastors, both trained and untrained, by elementary school teachers—mostly working as voluntary teachers, catechists, and also by itinerant preachers both official and frequently unofficial wandering evangelists. Preaching done mainly on Sunday morning worship services for 15 to 30 minutes and on mid-week cottage meetings for another half an hour—totals to a mere one hour's teaching in a week for whatever it is worth. We can presume that mostly these preachings are Biblical in the sense of mere quotations and expositions, and very little interpretations linking to life of the people. Of course, you have other annual opportunities like Harvest or Ingathering festivals, Christmas and Easter festivals when not much serious teaching could be given. And all this preaching for Teaching Ministry is done with taking all the age groups in a lump, whether children or youth adults. It is notoriously true that Sunday School work among rural children as one of my Pastor-reporters—frankly admitted—is 'only in name'. Much of the literature even if specially prepared for rural children are still not available to most of them because of lack of committed personnel who can carry on sustained work week after week. For one thing, not many literate rural volunteers are available on a permanent basis

because, once sufficiently literate they, all go to the urban areas, leaving only the teachers and other government workers who have to live in villages for the sake of their employment. So even the *Spoken Word*, which is the chief tool of Christian Education for our rural Christians proves to be too little and far apart, let alone the question of quality and content. Then there is also the problem of communication itself in preaching. This chief dependence on the spoken word is, of course, due to the high incidence of *illiteracy* in our rural areas. As per 1971 census, the national average of literacy was 29.45. In Kerala where Christian population is the highest in India with some 45 lakhs and the literacy rate there was about 60% next to Tamil Nadu with about 40%. But it is in Andhra Pradesh and North-East, India the rural Christian population is quite dense. In those regions the rural illiteracy is very high and so most of our rural Christians are illiterates. Thus, the written word through books and literature is not of much use for educating our rural Christian people.

2. Problems to PERSONNEL and their TRAINING has been indicated. A further word on this is necessary because the lack of adequate numbers and adequately trained Christian Educators in our rural congregation are a serious handicap. In fact, the main stay for looking after the rural congregations is actually the lonely, overburdened, over-worked but under-paid rural pastors. A safe guess is that on an average one pastor is given the oversight of 1,000 Christians in rural areas which may be spread out in as many as 40 villages, as is the case in Thirukalukundram Pastorate of the CSI Diocese of Madras. In this particular case, the non-graduate pastor is assisted by about a dozen village Church school teachers who conduct Sunday worship services in most of the villages, sometimes grouping 3 or 4 village congregations in one centre. This also means that not all village Christians can find it convenient to attend even weekly Sunday Services. Only in 2 of the 40 congregations in this particular pastorate, regular Sunday school classes are conducted. But not only children but even teachers who are volunteers mainly and not specifically trained nor equipped with suitable literature—are regular in attendance. Two of the 4 volunteer teachers in the town congregation at Thirukalukundram are unemployed, School final

failed youth, who were sent up by the pastor to attend a 3-day Sunday School teacher's Course organised by the diocesan youth department. And as for educating the youth and adults in the village congregations, practically there is no on-going programmes at this parish.

Now, the above is a picture not altogether isolated nor typical. Of course, in certain areas, even rural youth and women are included in largely urban oriented programmes of retreats, conferences etc., But it is more an exception than a rule that the rural youth and adult members are given specialised pastoral care and specified Christian education. It would appear that the only few occasions when these categories of 'growing' members of the parish get some extra Christian teaching when they are prepared for Confirmation, or Baptism, for Marriage, etc., and other family functions. Holy Communion Services are mostly quarterly affairs when the pastor is able to visit them, and their highest Church Officer like the Bishop goes to them perhaps once in two or three years. These visual occasions can be also time for effective education.

3. Another most significant area of Christian Education that gets shockingly little attention in our rural Churches, is the *Home*. Everybody asserts 'Christianity is something that is caught rather than taught'. And, if anywhere, it is the Christian home where Christianity may be caught. And yet in our rural Churches, if at all, it is the 'growing' persons like the children and youth are thought of for Christian education and the adults, the parents are totally ignored and neglected. Either, they are taken to know everything once having been baptised and confirmed or they are so domesticated to believe that they cannot divert their earning time to learning time. Of course, the 'too-little' Christian teaching has already made them 'do-little' Christians and their examples are not available for their children in most cases. In some areas like in CSI Dioceses, the Baptist Churches in North-East India, there is a new cadre of women workers who try to give regular weekly

teaching to uneducated rural women as to their Christian living and social responsibility, family budgeting and homecraft. This is done in limited areas and I thank God for this kind of emerging ministry in Rural churches. *Christian Mother*, is indeed the classical proto type of any Christian person. I cannot but urge a priority attention to care for and to educate every Christian mother. This is my way of insisting on the need for priority attention to educate, (not necessarily literacy) the Christian family.

The methodology of Christian Education seems to be solely confined to *spoken word*, in our rural congregations. Even the limitation of illiteracy that dominate the rural scene has not forced us to make new experiments on how to communicate the Gospel and the Christian teaching to our rural Christian people. Even the example of our Lord, who went on walking tours, during His earthly ministry—into the villages of Palestine, went about not only 'preaching the good news' mostly in parables (little stories) but also 'doing Good'; even His model has not inspired any new methodology for today's rural Christians. Recently ideas on educating the rural illiterate masses have been experimented upon by men like Paulo Frire ('Pedagogy of the Oppressed') with the specific concept of conscientization, that is creating a critical awareness of people's present plight so as to liberate themselves. Now, Christian Education programmes in rural areas can be geared to use this new methodology adopted to our conditions and attitudes of people in India.

It is true, there are already known and effective means of education such as AVA and Mass Media of Radio, Cinema and TV also. The Church seems to make the least use of these in our rural areas for we are reluctant to invest money in the rural areas.

REV. M. AZARIAH,
Secretary,
Christian Educational Council of India.

The Kodaikanal Ashram Fellowship

Christava Darsana Ashrama, our family name, is a fellowship to enable 'Persons of various races, nations, classes and faiths, unitedly to worship God and find new power for serving India'—a place in the beautiful Palni hills for those who desire to use their holidays (April, May, June) in forming creative personality and society, seeking a common centre in the Eternal Christ.

The 'Kodai Ashram' is at the 'Rock of Vision', one of the most beautiful of views, nearly 7500 feet altitude, where for 40 years some 50 friends gather yearly for disciplined spiritual living in every aspect of life, ever growing towards a 'Family of families'.

There are three main areas of daily living with which we concern ourselves :

1. The physical—Fellowship of manual labour towards the 'Dignity of Labour.'
2. The mental—Fellowship of study, thinking and dialogue.
3. The spiritual—Fellowship of devotional living, worship, and sharing.

Each member chooses as to where he will concentrate. However, all join in the common sharing of manual labour, worship, study and the breaking of bread.

We seek together to understand the importance of 'bread labour', the growth of creative personality, the ways of working for a balanced diet for the hungry of India, the need of hard study and group thinking for a working democracy. Most of all we go constantly to the Throne of Grace, the Source of Truth, the Incarnation of Love that our moorings may be firm, our bearings true and our growth upward.

The Ashram would open for the summer season on the 15th of April. The theme of the programme will be 'The Holy Spirit'. Dr. John V. Taylor's 'The Go-Between God' will be the text. Please do write for details to Dr. R. R. Keithahn, The Kodaikanal Ashram Fellowship, Kodaikanal-Madurai District. It will be a joy for us to have you with us.

DR. R. R. KEITHAHN.
[APRIL 1976]

First World Course for Leaders of Lay Training Concludes

Thirty-three leaders in the field of Lay Training from twenty-five countries around the world participated in an eight-week course held at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore in India from January 15th-March 13th, 1976 : The World Course ('CLLT 1976') was jointly sponsored by the WCC (Laity and Adult Education Desk) and the 'World Collaboration Committee,' the co-ordinating body of the regional Associations for Academies, Centres and Movements for Social Concern in Africa, Asia and Europe. The regions represented by the delegates of the CLLT were Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, Africa, Asia and Western Europe. India was represented by a delegation of six participants. The CLLT group also included Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Six of the participants were women.

Aiming at 'equipping the participants to become dynamic agents of social development in their respective countries in the light of the Christian faith' the course offered some unique opportunities: to meet with colleagues from a large variety of cultural back-ground and to form an ecumenical learning community over a period of about two months by sharing experiences, convictions and hopes across differing and even contradicting situations—to get acquainted with the political, economic and cultural developments in one of the world's largest countries among the developing nations—to study some of the major world-issues and to reflect together on the challenges posed by them for the churches, centres and movements which were represented.

The course began with a one week's 'encuentro' period, where the participants in small groups were exposed simultaneously to situations in six cities of India to see the social and economic conditions of people and to observe the responses given by Christian and other teams and centres in order to meet people's needs in such situations. Following the 'encuentros', the participants met at the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Whitefield, Bangalore for a fifty-days study and reflection period.

Seven global issues were selected for the course 'Food/Hunger', 'Labour/Industry', 'Health/Population', 'Rural Development', 'Political Life', 'Culture and Nationalism', 'Education'. Related Indian situations were visited, and with the help of knowledgeable resource persons analysed.

Then the participants worked in regional groups to articulate their responses to the basic challenges posed by such situations and problems. Bible-study and worship life formed an integral part of the programme.

In addition to the seven 'projects', the CLLT participants organised seminars and symposia on 'Human Rights and the struggle for Liberation', 'National Development Planning', 'The Churches' involvement in Social and Political Issues', 'Adult Education', 'Traditional Values and Modern Challenges and the relationship between the one-third and two-third world.'

A public reception was given to the delegates by the E C C in the presence of the Karnataka State Governor. Visits to congregations in Bangalore, the Maramon Convention—a great annual gathering of Christians in Kerala, the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam as well as to the Christian Medical College at Vellore, and several other Institutions and Centres of learning, etc., introduced the participants to wider aspects of the Indian situation.

A thorough evaluation—period at the end of the course revealed the deep impact which this experience had on the participants and brought valuable suggestions for improving further such ecumenical learning-processes which might in the future be organised on regional level. The members of the World Collaboration Committee being present during the evaluation period expressed their appreciation to the Dean of the Course, the Rev. M. A. Thomas, and the Co-ordinator, Rev. Werner Simpfendorfer, General Secretary, European Association of Academies from Germany for their leadership.

—WERNEI SIMPFENDORFER.

Reginald Heber 1783-1826

The 15th Synod of the Church of South India was held in January this year at Tiruchirapalli, formerly called Trichinopoly. This was the place where Bishop Heber died on 3rd April, 150 years ago.

Although a visitor to the Synod, I did not realize this until I read the inscription on the monument beside the small swimming bath in the compound of the Magistrate's court, still carefully preserved. Into this he plunged after a long hot morning with the Tamil Christians at the old Mission Church in the Fort and there his body was later found.

The story of his long journey from Calcutta, where he was the second Bishop, across India to Bombay,

then by sea to Ceylon, his return to Calcutta, the voyage to Madras and departure to Tanjore, in order to enquire into the problem of Caste among the Tamil Christians, is told in his famous *Narrative*.

By a strange coincidence one of the wandering Wesleyan missionaries, James Mowat, arrived at Trichinopoly on 31st March and wrote to the Society in London to tell how he was kindly received by Chaplain of the Station, Mr. Weight. The Bishop arrived from Tanjore next morning. 'In the evening I had the honour to dine in his company and I was gratified by the very lively interest His Lordship appeared to take in the exertions of all Missionary Societies, and

especially of the honourable mention he made of our Mission to Ceylon'.

On Sunday 2nd April, Mowat attended the Confirmation Service at the English Church. Next day, he was greatly shocked to learn of the Bishop's death and, after attending the funeral, left Trichinopoly.

The seeds of good relationship in South India, thus sown by Bishop Heber, bore their full fruit at

St. George's Cathedral, Madras on 27th September 1947 when the Service for the Consecration of the new Bishops in C. S. I. began with his hymn:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

N. C. SARGANT
Bishop.

Ten Commandments for Times of Crisis

Reprinted from *NEW CITIZEN*

ONE : Waste no time hunting a scapegoat. This is a species of horned and bearded ruminant which can neither be eaten or melted down for fuel. Better by far identify that tiny part of the present crisis we have helped to create by our greed or apathy, laziness or extravagance. Do something about them and we will become part of the answer rather than the problem.

TWO : Curse not our present predicament. Only reflect: the vast majority of the world's population would dearly love to be in it. They are not searching around for the odd gallon of petrol to fuel their car but for the odd crust of bread to feed their children. The only inflation known to them is the swollen belly of the under-nourished. The economics of starvation are sublimely simple—you do not eat so you die.

THREE : Put not your trust in any leader who lacks a sense of humour in a crisis, whether he be politician, trade unionist, financier or industrialist. He has no defence against self-idolatry, and there are enough false gods inviting our worship at the present time without adding to their number.

FOUR : On the subject of false gods—We have made a god out of growth only to find he has feet of sand. We need not a new source of energy but a new set of values in which Bigger is displaced by Better. In the last resort, excellence is the only worthwhile goal of any human activity.

FIVE : Let not economist nor statistician blow your mind with astronomic figures relating to barrels of oil or cascades of cash. Ponder that OTHER statistic which shows that Man is the costliest investment of all time. It took four billion years of evolutionary pain to produce him. Therefore the simplest man is infinitely more valuable than the most expensive commodity.

SIX : Whatever is wrong with the world, one thing is right with it—it produced you. You did not come

INTO this world, you came OUT of it. If God is our father, Earth is our mother, but if we do not stop polluting, poisoning and pillaging her then generations as yet unborn, won't be.

SEVEN : As Confucius never said: better no motor car than no legs. When we rage at the shortage of inessentials, consider the plight of those in our own society robbed of their human entitlement—a sound mind in a whole body, with the bare minimum of food, shelter and warmth to keep both together. They have absolute priority in the queue for what's going.

EIGHT : Whoever tries to corner the market in scarce commodities is returning a negative answer to that old Biblical question: Am I my brother's keeper? Wrong question. My brother doesn't need a keeper: he needs a brother.

NINE : Conspicuous consumption is the infallible sign of a decadent society. Some of my best friends, as the saying goes, are advertising experts, but if it costs tens of thousands of pounds to convince me that I need something, then I don't.

TEN : When the world's in a mess—and when wasn't it?—someone up there is telling us something. I think I hear him saying: 'You can survive, if you must, with a bare minimum of energy provided the shortfall is made up with that ir-replaceable quality—compassion.' Turn THAT tap off and the most affluent society will become as cold and lifeless as a polar ice-cap. For what's the point of having everything if nobody cares whether you live or die? God does—so back to the drawing board to design a society in which Man treats Creation as a community rather than a commodity.

—Presented in a BBC series by Dr. Colin Morris

Courtesy: *NEW CITIZEN, CCA NEWS.*

Letters to the Editor

'CAN DOWRY BE ERADICATED'

Sir,

The International Women's Year is just over. Women in India during the year have attained high recognition in many walks of life. For example, the Church of South India, the biggest Protestant Church in India, have recently resolved to ordain women as priests. The U. P. State Govt. have come forward with legislative measures to ban the Dowry system, and many other states will follow this example. The Union Minister of Education and Social Welfare, told the Rajya Sabha the other day, that the government was contemplating to prohibit giving and taking of dowry by government servants through appropriate provisions in the Govt. Servants' Conduct Rules. The Parliament has enacted legislations for equal wages for women for equal work. Can all these abolish the social evil of dowry system?

Dowry may mean wealth in the form of lands, or money or gifts presented either to the bride or bridegroom or bridegroom's father at the time of or before or after marriage. The form of wealth and the person to whom it is made over, may differ from place to place and from community to community. But so long as girls have no legal right for an equal share of property along with their brothers, it is but proper, just and equitable that the girl or her future family should get at least some, if not an equal share of her father's property in the shape of dowry.

Many parents get it in writing from their daughters at the time of marriage, that they will have no more claim over their parents' property. Some promise to

pay their share later, but do not stand to their promise. The parents in most cases, develop a funny sentiment towards their daughters after marriage, and are very keen to ensure that properties go to their sons only. Indian Christian women have their equal right to property before the law, but not in practice, with a few exceptions.

Indians generally marry and then love. When one enters into a marriage alliance with another, he or she or the parent takes into consideration the other party's income, physical features, education and family connections. It is apparent, no sensible girl will fall in love with and marry a boy having no education or income or handsomeness. Property, therefore, is one of the important criteria for marriage, though not the sole criterion either for the boy or girl.

Even if the Dowry system as such is outlawed, all girls cannot marry Doctors, Engineers, Class I officers, etc. There will have to be some other criterion of selection for these elite husbands. A girl with no physical beauty or good employment or family connections, may not be able to secure a handsome husband. It is therefore necessary that laws are passed enabling the girls to have equal property rights along with boys, and rectify the age-old injustice to the women-folk of India. Where legal privileges are existing, the girls need to be properly educated of their rights. Only then the Dowry System can be effectively eradicated.

S. PONRAJ,
Madras.

News from the Dioceses

JAFFNA DIOCESE

The Jaffna Diocese because of its geographical situation and size has problems which in some ways are very different from those of the other Dioceses of the Church of South India in the main land. However it is an integral part of the Church of South India and shares its common life and problems. Anything that strengthens the historic links between the Diocese and the Church of South India as a whole is most welcome particularly after the recent set back in the negotiations for Church Union in Sri Lanka.

The visit of the General Secretary of the Synod, Mrs. Daisy Gopal Ratnam at the end of February and early March was one of the encouragement, inspiration and challenge to Diocese. Mrs. Gopal Ratnam who spent a week in Sri Lanka, addressed the

sessions of the Diocesan Council on the subject, 'The C. S. I. faces the Future.' She later visited some of the Churches and Institutions of the Diocese and addressed three representative women's groups in Tellipallai, Chavakachcheri and Colombo. At Colombo she also had a conference with a few of the leaders of other Churches.

Every one of the meetings addressed by Mrs. Gopal Ratnam was followed by lively discussions and her stimulating addresses, her outspokenness and frank expression of views were greatly appreciated. While she was generous in her appreciation of the strong points in the life of the Diocese, she was equally forthright in pointing out the weaknesses and challenged the Diocese to become more involved and engaged in the problems of the Society around it. The Diocese remains grateful for this visit.

NOTICES

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Please send me names and addresses of any Christians known to you who have lived for twelve months or more (at any time) in any Ashram in India (Christian, Gandhian or Other).

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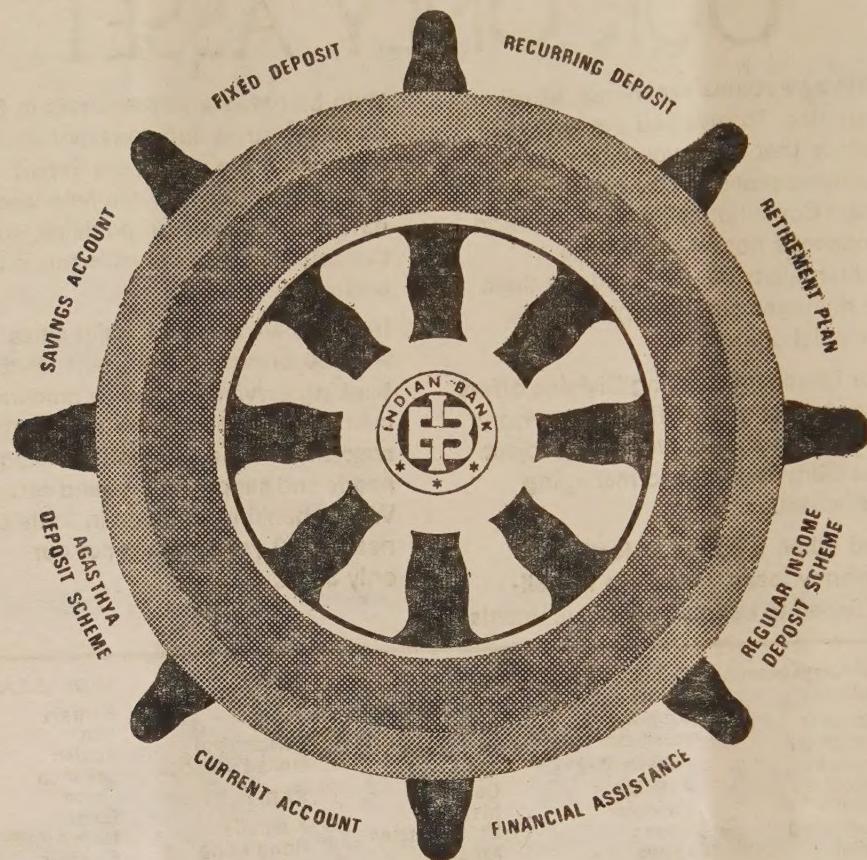
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